

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records. It states that records are essential for the proper management of the organization and for ensuring that all activities are properly documented.

2. The second part of the document discusses the various methods used to collect and analyze data. It notes that data collection is a critical step in the research process and that the accuracy of the data is directly related to the quality of the results.

3. The third part of the document discusses the importance of data analysis. It states that data analysis is the process of examining the data to identify patterns and trends. This is a crucial step in the research process as it allows the researcher to draw conclusions from the data.

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the importance of reporting the results of the research. It states that the results of the research should be reported in a clear and concise manner, and that the researcher should provide a detailed explanation of the methods used and the results obtained.

5. The fifth part of the document discusses the importance of peer review. It states that peer review is a process by which other researchers evaluate the work of a researcher. This is an important step in the research process as it allows other researchers to provide feedback and to ensure that the research is of high quality.

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THEOTOKOS;

OR

THE DIVINE MATERNITY.

BY

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

PURGATORY. 1843.

FREE CHURCH CATECHISM 'ON POPERY.' 1847.

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PROTESTANT PRESS and VATICAN COUNCIL.

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MEDIÆVAL HOLINESS, and the 'DARK AGES.'

EDUCATION: CHURCH AND STATE.

LIMBO; Apology for Purgatory and Prayers for the Dead.

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Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Dec. 8, 1873.



‘And Joachim the high priest came from Jerusalem to Bethulia, with all his ancients, to see Judith. And when she was come out to him, they all blessed her with one voice, saying, Thou art the glory of Jerusalem, thou art the joy of Israel, thou art the honour of our people.’ JUDITH xv. 9.

THESE words, Brethren, are read in the Book of Judith—that Book, which is registered in the veritable Canon of Scripture, and which the ancient Church alone can authenticate. They have reference to that valiant woman who was instrumental in destroying the impious tyrant Holofernes, as well as in rescuing from unutterable misery God’s own people. If, however, they have appropriately been used in regard to one specially-gifted woman under the Mosaic Law, how much happier is their application in respect to another transcendently more favoured woman under the Christian Covenant? For, amongst all the creatures that ever were fashioned by the hand of the Great Creator, there is one so privileged—so exalted—so bound up with the adorable Trinity—that in the language of holy writ she is named as the daughter, the mother, the spouse of the Most High. She is characterised as perfection itself—as the one by excellence—as the grand masterpiece of God’s creative power. ‘One is my dove,’ as is said in the Book of Canticles; ‘my perfect one is but one.’ Who, then, is this singularly-gifted creature? Who is she that is described by the inspired penman as coming forth as the morning, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in array? Who is she the like to whom, as St. Bernard declares, never was before, and never shall be again? Need I tell you what you know so well—that this creature, so perfect—this cherished daughter of the Great King—this Immaculate Mother of the God Incarnate—this pure Spouse of the Divine Spirit—is the ever-blessed Virgin Mary? She is that incomparable creature who was promised six thousand years ago to the fallen children of Adam, whose seed was to crush the head of the olden Serpent. She is that spotless creature, who, by the power of the Holy Ghost, was to conceive and to bring forth a son. She is that ‘rod out of the root of Jesse,’ from which buds

as a divine flower the Messiah Himself! She is that chosen land of benediction which the dews of heaven gently water, and the atmosphere of which is redolent with the aroma of universal redemption! Yet, if we look around for any external mark of this ineffable grandeur, we shall find absolutely none. We behold a young virgin living in retirement, at Nazareth, with her reputed spouse as her most chaste guardian, and who is so exceedingly timid as to tremble at the apparition even of an archangel. There is no parade about the humble abode of this daughter of the house of David—there is no emblazoned banner to indicate the royalty of her pedigree—there is no herald with sound of trumpet to proclaim her lofty destiny. The Psalmist says, ‘All the glory of the king’s daughter is within’!

But the scene is quickly to be changed. The Mother of the Redeemer is to be invested with marvellous attributes. The Book of the Apocalypse records, ‘A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.’ Yes, the blessed Virgin Mother is clothed with the Sun of glory—that is, with Christ Himself, her Divine Son. She has the Moon, that is, the transitory things of the world, under her feet; and the twelve stars with which she is crowned are the twelve Apostles, who encircled her earthly pilgrimage. No wonder, then, that year after year Holy Church, throughout the wide extent of her universality, should celebrate the glories of Mary; no wonder that thanksgivings should be everywhere offered to the Triune Deity for the favours bestowed on this spotless maid; no wonder that praises should be awarded to the great Pontiff, who, in the year 1854, in the glorious vatican Basilica, surrounded by the sacred college of Cardinals, and by Bishops from all parts of the globe, should have issued the decree of the Immaculate Conception—that Mary, by a special privilege of Divine Providence, was conceived, and was born, without the stain of original sin! No wonder that on the recurrence of this anniversary Festival we should gather around the Sanctuary and repeat the hallowed words of the vesper service—words which were spoken by the high priest and the ancients of old to Judith, but which are now so happily addressed by the Universal Church to Mary: ‘Thou art the glory of Jerusalem, thou art the joy of Israel, thou art the honour of our people!’

What, then, can we do more befitting this august occasion than bind together the choicest garland of flowers from the garden of Holy Church, and present it as a votive offering at the shrine of the Virgin Daughter of Sion? But what flowers so fair can we select in honour of Her who is described as the Lily of the valley—the morning Star—the mystical Rose—the Ark of the Covenant—the very Gate of Heaven! What praises sufficiently ardent can we bestow upon Her who, according to the Ancient Fathers, is above

all praise! In what terms glowing enough can we speak of Her upon whom the fine arts have lavished their choicest treasures—whom Painting has encompassed with stars, and Statuary with angels—to whom Music has devoted its sweetest chaunts, and Poetry, in verse sublime, has proclaimed the startling truth, ‘Our tainted nature’s solitary boast’! How, indeed, can we adequately speak of Her who was destined to bring forth the promised Holy One—the Hope of the Patriarchs, the predicted of the Prophets, the expected of the nations, the desire of the Eternal Hills—the Messiah Himself! How can we do justice to a theme which would require the eagle-mind of the beloved Evangelist, and the seraphic tongue of the Baptist Precursor!—Deign, however, most blessed Lady, to accept our meed of praise, and give us strength against thy foes!

Foes, indeed, against the Immaculate Mother are assuredly not wanting in this materialistic age. In the British isles they seem specially to abound. One of the last—certainly not the least—has from the Episcopal throne disturbed the slumbers of Anglicanism by reviving the Nestorian heresy, by declaring that Mary the Virgin is not the Theotokos—is not the Mother of God! The Right Reverend Prelate of Bath and Wells has, however unconsciously, attempted to undermine the sacred mystery of the Incarnation! Hence Ritualism is loud in protest against repudiating the Divine Maternity. And with great reason indeed. If the Blessed Virgin be not the Mother of God, who brought forth the Redeemer? If Christ Jesus be not God, who purchased the plentiful atonement?

This desperate conflict with Divine Revelation—this most unhappy reiteration of the Nestorian heresy must be explained. Every effect must have its cause:—the cause is patent as is the effect. The Holy Virgin, being the lover of religious unity, is ever opposed to heresy; consequently, the votaries of heresy are ever opposed to her. In the same way, the Roman Pontiff being invariably opposed to religious dissent, it is idle to affirm that Religionists of ‘every wind of doctrine’ are uniformly opposed to the Pope! Thus is it in the spiritual world. The body is always at war with the soul—the flesh with the spirit—so that even the great Apostle of the Gentiles exclaimed, ‘Who will deliver me from the body of this death?’ It is so in the physical world. The loftiest points attract the lightning—the central power invites attack. As the strongest fortress becomes the brunt of battle, so the keystone of religion is the touchstone for assault! The Blessed Virgin in heaven and the successor of St. Peter on earth stand ever prominently forward. They have been constituted as the bulwarks of the faith—the guardians of religion ‘*clean and undefiled*.’ Creatures *unclean and defiled* blurt against them the aspid venom of their tongues and pens, which is vain as the ocean’s spray against the rocks!

Let us, however, waive, as is our wont, all mere personality,

which is utterly irrelevant. Let us gird up our loins for the elucidation of eternal truth. We shall first delineate the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception—we shall then vindicate the doctrine of the Divine Maternity.

Conception in itself is of a twofold nature—active and passive. The active conception regards the generation of the body. The passive conception regards the union of the soul with the body already formed. The active conception has reference to the holy parents of the Blessed Virgin, who concurred by natural means to the formation of that body into which the soul was to be infused. The passive conception is the point of time when the soul has been infused—‘For the infusion of the soul into and its union with the body duly organised is commonly called *passive conception*, which in reality takes place in that very instant in which the rational soul is united to the body, furnished with all its members and organs.’ Thus speaks the great Pontiff Benedict XIV., whose sentiments are reëchoed by our most celebrated theologians.

In believing, then, that the conception of Mary was immaculate—in other words, that Mary was conceived without sin—we speak only of the *passive* conception—we mean that the soul of the Holy Virgin in being united to the body, by virtue of the sanctifying grace in which it was created, and the anticipated atonement of her Divine Son, was entirely exempt from the stain of original sin. This doctrine of the Church was unfolded by Pope Alexander VII. in his allocution, *Sollicitudo*, &c., dated December 8, 1661.

But to be still more explanatory, in order that those separated from Holy Church may appreciate in some measure the wonderful privilege of the Immaculate Conception, let it be observed that the general laws of Providence were signally suspended in her regard. Every law has its exceptions, and it is a maxim in ethics that exception confirms the law. This principle is not merely confined to human laws, it refers to the natural and supernatural order. Thus it is a general law that all women conceive their children in the ordinary way; the Blessed Virgin was exempt from that law, and conceived her Divine Son in an extraordinary way, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

It is a general law that all women cease to be virgins when they become mothers; the Blessed Mary was exempt from that law, and while remaining a virgin became a mother.

It is a general law that all mothers bring forth their children in sorrow; the Blessed Virgin was exempt from that law, since she experienced the greatest joy in bringing forth her Divine Son.

It is a general law that man is subject to fall into actual sin, and that, as St. James writes, ‘in many things we all offend.’ St. Augustine, however, in his treatise on Nature and Grace, declares that to this general law Mary is a brilliant exception. It has ever been the universal belief of the Church, that the Blessed Virgin

never fell into the least venial fault. In the Divine Office we repeat, 'Thou art all fair, O Mary, and there is no stain in thee.'

It is a general law, in fine, that all bodies are reduced to dust after death; but the Blessed Virgin was exempt from that law. The ancient traditions declare, that after her death her body was deposited in the sepulchre. Three days having elapsed, the Apostles, at the special instance of St. Thomas, who had been absent at her demise, removed the stone, when, lo, the body was no longer there; the Virgin Mother having been escorted by angels into the realms of bliss. Hence the celebration of the glorious festival of the Assumption, or the taking up of the body of the Virgin Mother into the heavenly mansions. In reference to that august solemnity, Holy Church, transported with delight, represents the angelic choirs as lost in rapture, and exclaiming, 'Who is she that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delight, and leaning upon her Beloved?'

Now if the general laws of Providence were thus suspended in her regard—if she were exceptional among all other beings—if the Three Divine Persons had decreed to create *her most pure and perfect*, who in the fulness of time was to become the Virgin Mother of the Eternal Son—if she were constituted the *very Theotokos—the Deipara—the Mother of the God Incarnate*—if she were to concur with her own free will in the economy of the world's redemption—is it in accordance with reason or religion to suppose that this vessel of election—this creature upon whom the Blessed Trinity had lavished the plenitude of favours—is it, I ask, possible to imagine that Mary, the Mother of the Redeemer, could ever have been, even for a moment, under the slavery of the arch-enemy of mankind, or that her pure soul could ever for an instant have been blighted by the miasma of his malignant breath? Why, reason rebels against the thought—religion declares it blasphemous! Hence the Church has proclaimed, by her Infallible Head, that 'It is a dogma of faith that the most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instant of her conception, by a singular privilege and grace of God, in virtue of the foreseen merits of Jesus Christ the Saviour of the human race, was preserved exempt from all stain of original sin.' This solemn definition of the Immaculate Conception by the Supreme Pontiff, for which so many supplications had been forwarded to Rome, and respecting which the whole Catholic Episcopate had been consulted, is no new doctrine—as has been flippantly asserted—since it was ever the teaching of the Church. It is simply the definitive and emphatic sealing of a dogmatic question, upon which the Holy See had never previously made any authoritative pronouncement!

No marvel, then, at the joy which was awakened when this momentous question was set at rest—no marvel at the delight which this declaration of the Immaculate Conception diffused

throughout the Catholic world—no marvel that all Christendom should have received it with triumph as the express decision of the Holy Ghost—no marvel that every religious heart should have thrilled with holy jubilee, that it was reserved for the immortal Pius IX., who in the midst of the storm so steadily steers the barque of Peter, to proclaim from the infallible pontifical throne that the Blessed Virgin was conceived without sin, and thus to place the diadem of brightest glory upon the sacred brow of the Redeemer's Virgin Mother!

Nor can all this be matter of surprise when we consider who is this Mother, and who is this Son. This Mother is the second Eve, who was to repair the dire calamities of the first Eve; and this Son is the second Adam, who was to restore mankind to the heavenly birthright which, by the fall of the first Adam, had been so disastrously forfeited. Why, then, wonder if the Catholic heart should dilate with intense affection for such a Mother and such a Son!—for how, indeed, can we love the Son without loving the Mother? Why should we, then, be slow in proclaiming aloud the distinctive glories of both the one and the other? Why not declare the Mother to be the most perfect of all God's creatures, while we declare that the incarnate Son is the Omnipotent Creator of heaven and earth, and that He is therefore the Maker and Redeemer of His Immaculate Mother as well as of all mankind!

If it be said that the Bible does not, in so many words, declare this incomparable privilege, it is certainly no difficult matter to glean from its pages that there is an equivalent, though an indirect, *declaration*. In the Book of Genesis we find recorded that the Almighty pronounced a malediction on the Serpent, which had induced Eve, and through her, Adam, to taste the forbidden fruit. He declared, 'I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel.' Now, in considering this passage, commentators are unanimous that the seed of the woman is the Word Incarnate, and therefore the second Adam; and the woman, whose seed or Son He is, must be His mother Mary, the second Eve. The learned Tirinus says, 'By the woman is especially designated the Blessed Virgin Mary. As by bringing forth Christ to us she was made a most pure Eve, that is, the *mother of the living*—so she thoroughly crushed the head and power of the Serpent. First, because she did not contract any sin, not even *original sin*; secondly, because she had not any inclination to sin; finally, because by the power of Christ she has completely vanquished and put to flight all heresy and tyranny.'

It may be remarked, as we find recorded in Church annals, that many in olden times were most anxious to probe the origin of this holy Virgin, as it was regarded in some way preternatural. Extraordinary opinions were entertained by tribes and peoples upon

the subject. The Collyridians, for example, supposed that she was born of a virgin, and were prepared to give her divine honours; while the Manicheans, believing that she was an angel in human form, would have been disposed to idolise her. Other visionaries entertained their own fantastic and conflicting notions. Nor can it be matter of surprise, that to those separated from the communion of Holy Church the conception of her who was destined to bring forth the Saviour of men should be veiled in no little obscurity—nay, that marvellous presages should have been supposed to precede the birth of this wonderful Creature, when we reflect on what took place, in regard to the antecedents of several of the saints themselves of the old Law. Without entering into multiplied detail, we may state that Joachim and Anna were her parents—that they were far advanced in years—that they were childless, and beyond the hope of offspring; yet by Divine intervention ‘the barren is to bring forth, and the sterile to rejoice.’ St. Epiphanius, who cites the received traditions of his time, has recorded that while ‘they were engaged in prayer, Joachim on a mountain in the desert, and Anna in her garden, an angel of the Lord announced to them both the conception of Mary.’ St. John Damascen explains why the Blessed Virgin should be born of a sterile mother. He says, ‘That He who alone was new beneath the sun, and the head of prodigies, might open the way for Himself through prodigies, and that the order of things might ascend from the lowest to the highest by degrees.’ And again he observes, ‘Anna, who brought forth God’s Mother, was not to yield to any of those mothers who had been made illustrious.’ Rupert happily remarks that all those in the Scriptures who were born of sterile mothers were great personages, who present most portentous tokens in their lives! Nicephorus, quoting Evodius, patriarch of Antioch, states that when Mary was three years old, her parents presented her in the temple, where, like the child Samuel, she took up her abode for eleven years; at the expiration of which she was delivered by the priests to the sacred guardianship of the aged and saintly Joseph.

But without entering into an historical narrative of the Blessed Virgin’s life, let us revert to what has been lately the question of the day. Let us refer to the recent dogmatical definition of the Immaculate Conception, which is henceforth declared an article of faith. Now be it observed that in the depositum of revealed religion there are, so to speak, primary as well as secondary truths—truths implicitly believed although not explicitly defined, and therefore some of these grand truths appear to have been kept in abeyance, and to develop themselves according to the exigencies of circumstances. The Church, being the Infallible Guardian of the depositum, is the divinely authorised exponent of all revealed religion. Although it is alleged that, as a general rule, no dogmatical definition is propounded, unless some new heresy has been broached,

still the Church reserves to herself the right to speak when she may judge expedient. Let us give a few cases in point.

The Church spoke in the first century, when the heresy of the Ebionites was condemned, which denied that Mary had conceived Jesus of the Holy Ghost in her virginity, and made Him simply the son of Joseph the carpenter.

The Church spoke in the second century, when the heresy of the Gnostics was condemned, who taught that Christ took not real flesh from Mary, but assumed only the appearance of flesh!

The Church spoke in the third century, when the heresy of Paul of Samosata was condemned, who taught that Jesus Christ never existed until He was born of the Virgin, and that He was a mere man!

The Church spoke in the fourth century, when Pope Siricius assembled a Council at Rome in 390, which condemned the impiety of Jovinian and his adherents, who denied the perpetual virginity of the Mother of God!

The Church spoke in the fifth century, when Pope Celestine, by the council of Ephesus in 431, excommunicated Nestorius and his abettors, who denied that Mary the Virgin was the Mother of God! This heresy first brought about the dogmatical definition of the Divine Maternity. Thus do we see that circumstances call forth at times a more explicit declaration of Christian doctrine, and the Church, ever guided by the Holy Ghost, is alone to judge of the 'times and seasons.' St. Bernard observes that in the promises made to the patriarchs, in the oracles of the prophets, and in the whole series of mysterious symbols in the ancient law, Mary, the Mother of the Redeemer, was strikingly foreshadowed. Read, exclaims he, that mysterious volume, in which are recounted all the wonders of the creation—the *origin of the world, of man, of religion*—and what do we find? There, in language which makes the heart bleed with sorrow, are described the lamentable fall and subsequent calamities of our first parents. Immediately after follows the solemn promise of a future deliverer, who, in the course of ages, was to restore to man his birthright, and who, for 4000 years, was the only consolation, as He was the only hope, of Adam's unfortunate posterity.

Remark in what terms this divine promise is couched: 'And the Lord God said to the serpent, Because thou hast done this thing, and by the woman hast introduced sin into the world, I will put enmities between thee and the woman. She shall give birth to a son, who shall become the terror of thy race and the destroyer of thy empire; she shall disarm thy sting of its venom, and shall grind thy head to the dust.'

See, then, in the very first of the sacred oracles, which proceeded from God Himself, the consolatory promise of *her* who was to bring forth the Saviour. See how the *mother* and the *Son* are

inseparably linked together, and see how all our destinies for time and eternity are closely interwoven with Jesus the incarnate Son and Mary His immaculate Virgin Mother!

The great prophet Isaiah, under the influence of divine inspiration, pierced the mist of ages, and foretold that great event to which is annexed the salvation of the world. Transported out of himself, he calls upon the house of David to listen to his words: 'Give ear, O house of David, the Lord Himself shall give unto you a sign. Behold, a *Virgin* shall conceive, a *Virgin* shall bring forth a Son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel, which means God with us.' She shall be a *Virgin*, yet a *Mother*! O, let all nature stand astonished at this unparalleled prodigy! A sign of salvation is given by God to His people; *Mary* is that sign—*Mary* and her virginal fecundity—*Mary* and her divine maternity—*Mary* a *Mother* and a *Virgin*! Assuredly never was the like heard of before, never shall the like be heard of again!

From the Prophets let us pass to the evangelists. Let us open the book of the Gospels, and examine what is there said in regard to this most holy *Virgin*. Read over and again the first chapter of St. Luke, and then say what think you of that creature, to whom the Creator of the universe delegates the archangel Gabriel to treat of the mystery of the Incarnation; say what you believe of that creature whom the celestial messenger contemplates with mingled feelings of reverential awe—whom he salutes in the words of inspiration, 'Hail, full of grace,' thou in whom the Spirit of God doth dwell! Hail, *Mary*! chosen from amongst all the daughters of *Eve* to be the vessel of singular benedictions—to be the *Mother* of the Incarnate Son! 'Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee!' How truly wonderful this salutation which is pronounced by the tongue of the archangel! The Blessed *Virgin* in her humility is astounded at this address, and in the simplicity of her spotless heart she asks, 'How can this be, for I know not man?'

The heavenly ambassador removes the difficulty by announcing that it is the special work of Heaven: 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; and therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of the Most High.' Thus speaks the archangel Gabriel, and language similar to this never before was addressed to to mortal being. These words, which contain in themselves the loftiest panegyric, served only to intensify if possible the profound humility of this holy maid. Having, however, Heaven's guarantee that her virginal purity should remain intact, she cried out in all the lowliness of her heart, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word.' Thy will be done, O God, as Thou hast made manifest to me through Thy archangel!

But there is something more which contributes to show forth the surpassing excellence of this immaculate *Virgin*, and to unfold

her matchless prerogatives. She had occasion to pay a visit to her cousin St. Elizabeth, in the mountains of Judea. As soon as that holy woman beheld our Blessed Lady drawing near to old Zachary's dwelling, her heart throbbed with delight; the unborn precursor, John the Baptist, leapt for joy, and she herself, inspired by the Holy Ghost, cried out in rapture, 'Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb; and whence is it to me that the Mother of my Lord should come to visit me?' The saintly Elizabeth was thus rapt in ecstasy at the condescending visit of the Redeemer's Mother, and regarded herself as favoured beyond measure that the divine Virgin should come under her roof, and take up an abode for three months!

Mary, no longer able to suppress those feelings of gratitude to the Most High which were struggling for articulation, burst forth into that canticle of praise which is now used daily in the Church's office—that sublime canticle which is so well calculated to thrill every Christian soul with the sweetest emotion. Under the influence of heaven-born inspiration she cried out in all the fulness of her heart, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For He that is mighty hath done great things to me, and holy is His name: *for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.*' How marvellous this prophecy, which was dictated by the Holy Ghost! How wonderful this creature in regard to whom such 'great things were done'!—this creature who was to be blessed for ever by all generations! Is this enough to prove the incomparable dignity of Mary? Is it enough to justify the veneration which Catholics pay to this purest of virgins? Is it not a warrant for us to cry out, in the language which the poor woman addressed to our Saviour, 'Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the breasts that gave Thee suck!'

From the Evangelists, who have recounted the history of the blessed Mary, turn we now to the Apostles themselves. How exalted is the testimony which they likewise yield to the incomparable merits of this immaculate Virgin! In that sacred symbol of faith which was drawn up by them—that creed which bears their name, and which we are in the habit of daily reciting—how simple and how striking is the allusion to the Virgin Mother! In that summary of Christian belief, every article of faith could not be enunciated. Great mysteries are there omitted—important doctrines are undefined, which in after ages were solemnly decreed: all these truths, however, are substantially contained in those wide-embracing words, 'I believe in the holy Catholic Church!' But this is not the case with the Virgin Mother of Jesus and her august prerogatives, since she is there enshrined in the most conspicuous position. Her divine maternity is loudly proclaimed. The transcendent privilege of being the Mother of the Redeemer is recorded in letters more precious than gold. After expressing belief in the Creator of heaven and

earth, the college of Apostles in their symbol proceed to make formal mention of the incarnation of the Eternal Son and His temporal birth from His Virgin Mother. It is there declared in broadest outline, and ever shall it be repeated throughout Christendom, that the Son of God was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, and 'born of the Virgin Mary'!

O, power of God, known only to God, and incomprehensible to man! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, and who hath been His counsellor? Thus, then, is the most holy Virgin bound up in the closest relationship with the most adorable Trinity—as Daughter of God the Father, Mother of God the Son, Spouse of God the Holy Ghost. Thus stands forth revealed a grand fact which is in itself ineffably mysterious, and which baffles all mere human understanding! For is it not most mysterious that God should have become bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, and that Mary the Virgin should really and truly have been His immaculate Mother? Is it not most mysterious that the Holy Ghost should have set aside all the laws of nature, and should have in this solitary instance absolutely formed a new and most wonderful creation—giving fecundity to the Mother, while He preserved the integrity of the Virgin!

O, transcendent elevation of the creature in relation to the Creator! O, mystery of mysteries, which brings down to the ground the supercilious intellect of man, while it elevates humanity to an union with the Divinity! Yet, however mysterious, it is a mystery upon which hinges the whole system of the Christian religion, and which must be believed as a leading article of divine revelation!

Behold here literally realised the good tidings which the angel announced to the shepherds of old! Behold here verified what the prophets have predicted—what the evangelists have recorded—what the apostles have proclaimed during the whole course of their sacred ministrations! Behold here the sum and substance of the Christian dispensation, which in its entire, and not in any fragmentary, form must be accepted! Yes, this mystery of the heaven-born incarnation—of the immaculate conception—of the divine maternity, shall remain the subject of astonishment to angels and to men, for all eternity! Yet these are the glorious mysteries which we now celebrate at this anniversary festival, and which are commemorated with unspeakable joy by the children of Holy Church in every Christian Catholic land.

No marvel, then, that this astounding truth, so sweetly consoling to the faithful, should have proved a stumbling-block to the unbeliever in former times as well as in the present. No marvel that the mystery of the incarnation, and the mysteries which it involves, should have been opposed by men who would not understand the ways, nor yet realise to themselves the power, of God. No marvel that from the denial, or only partial admission, of that hal-

lowed mystery, diverse and conflicting heresies should have started into existence, and which have their counterpart amidst the monstrous impieties of the present day. Need I mention Arianism, Macedonianism, Eutychianism, Nestorianism?

Arius denied the divinity of Jesus Christ.

Macedonius denied the divinity of the Holy Ghost.

Eutyches asserted that Christ had only one nature.

Nestorius, as we have seen, denied that the Blessed Virgin was the Mother of God.

Without dwelling at any length on these and collateral heresies, let me draw special attention to the last-named, as there is a circumstance connected therewith which shows the mind of the Church at the early period when it was broached, while it rebukes the preposterous accusation of 'mariolatry.'

The fourth century had just wound to a close, when, at Constantinople, an unworthy pastor succeeded to the government of that immense flock, which the saintly Gregory Nazianzen and the immortal orator St. John Chrysostom had for long years nourished with the milk of holy doctrine. This hypocritical prelate was Nestorius by name, who, by consummate address, had contrived to be elevated to the episcopate. Quickly did he prove himself unworthy of the position, and with remorseless conscience did he attempt to poison the innocent lambs of the fold. Instead of inculcating the doctrine which had been handed down by traditional teaching, and which he himself had received, he propounded a monstrous creed of his own perverse ingenuity. From the episcopal throne, and from the very spot where the magnificent homilies of his illustrious predecessors had been delivered, Archbishop Nestorius had the blasphemous temerity to assert that the Blessed Virgin Mary was not the Mother of God!

At this frightful impiety, the whole assembly present was thrown into the utmost consternation. The cry of horror was simultaneously raised. The priests and the people fled precipitately from the temple of religion. The sheep left the hireling—the flock abandoned the wolf in sheep's clothing. The city of Constantinople was in fear and trembling, apprehensive of some dread visitation. The report of the outrage offered to the Virgin Mother of God was quickly noised abroad. The entire Christian world shook to its very centre. Africa, headed by St. Cyril, the apostolic Patriarch of Alexandria, burst forth with the loud cry of indignation—the mountains of Asia and Europe echoed back the shout. The great Pope Celestine—who had at that very time sent Palladius to Scotland and Patrick to Ireland—assembled the Bishops of Italy at Rome; and from the infallible Pontifical chair of St. Peter fulminated an anathema against the monstrous heresy and its impious abettor!

Nor was this all. A general council was convoked at Ephesus.

The representatives of the widely-scattered Churches were assembled together for deliberation. There in St. Mary's renowned Basilica more than two hundred venerable Bishops, headed by the legates of the apostolic Roman See—Arcadius, Projectus, and Philip—came to the unanimous resolve of pronouncing sentence of deposition against the audacious heresiarch. Then it was that the aged Patriarch of Alexandria, who was the master-spirit present, and who was likewise one of Rome's apostolic delegates, rose from his chair to wind up the proceedings of the solemn consistory. He examined the question at issue under its various bearings; he recounted the various Scriptural arguments; he appealed to the unanimous traditions of the Eastern and Western Churches, as given in evidence by the apostolic fathers present; he declared that the perpetual teaching of the Christian Church proclaimed not only that Mary the Virgin was the blessed Mother of the God incarnate, but that all Christians ever manifested towards her the most filial veneration.

The old patriarch, so pious and so eloquent, borne along with supernatural emotion, seemed as it were like one inspired. His eyes were on fire, his voice was trumpet-tongued, his whole frame shook; the zeal for the honour of the Redeemer's Mother devoured every fibre of his heart; his soul was agonised at the impiety of Nestorius. He spoke as he had never spoken before. He stood up as the intrepid champion of the faith once delivered to the saints, to proclaim the cardinal truths of Christianity. Need I tell you that he was equal to the occasion, and that his address, delivered with such overpowering earnestness, was the very masterpiece of Christian oratory? His words inflamed with holy indignation every heart present, and in a voice tremulous with emotion, of which time has prolonged the echo, he launched forth against the blasphemous heresiarch the thunderbolts of a superhuman eloquence. At the conclusion of his impassioned harangue, which lasted till the night was far spent, and which was received with unbounded acclamation, he turned his eyes towards heaven, and in the name of all the prelates and fathers assembled, he poured forth upon the Immaculate Virgin the streams of the most enrapturing panegyric.

'We salute thee, O Virgin Mother,' did he say, 'thou who art the living and the immortal temple of the Divinity, the treasure and the light of the world, the flower of virginity, the support of the Orthodox Faith, the firm stay of all the Churches! Thou who didst bring forth a God, and didst conceal in thy chaste womb Him whom no space can contain! Thou by whom the Holy Trinity is known and adored, the Cross of Calvary honoured by all the earth—in whom the angels and archangels rejoice, and before whom the demons fly away! Thou by whom fallen man is restored to the inheritance, idolatry is destroyed, and Christianity

is established. We hail, we praise thee, O Virgin Mother, of whom the prophets have spoken, the evangelists have written, the apostles have preached! What more shall I say? Thou . . . !

After this magnificent burst of all but inspired eloquence, silence would be more telling than words. No longer, then, should we venture to dilate upon this theme, however glorious, which has been treated by the Patriarch of Alexandria with such grand Patristic erudition and such exhaustive cogency of argument. Simply let us express our lament that any of the cankerous heresies of the fourth century should be reproduced in the nineteenth, while we feel more than astonished that, in these Ritualistic days, the monstrous hallucinations of Nestorius of Constantinople should have been so recently promulgated from the pontifical throne by the Lord Bishop of Bath and Wells. This is, indeed, a perverse abuse of thought. But thought has been abused before. It was abused by the rebel angels; by Adam and Eve; by every abettor of heresy and schism. It is abused now most flagrantly in the opposition which is brought to bear in so many lands against the one Church of God upon earth. Yet opposition, whether by false doctrine in England, or by brute force in Germany, is comparatively of little avail with the Church, which is sure eventually to triumph. The Church is eternal; her enemies are ephemeral. The Church is 'stronger than Heaven;' her enemies are weak as the earth. The Church is entrenched in a position which is impregnable; her enemies fight out their short-lived day, and quickly disappear from the arena. The Church lives; her old enemies are dead. The Church lives not as a petrification of bygone years, but full of youthful vigour; her enemies departed may be assimilated to the state of the Egyptian mummies. The Church lives and points to the tombs of her persecutors on the Appian way, in the Germanic vaults, in the Gallic mausoleums! The Church lives her life of Faith, Hope, Charity. Her enemies are mowed down in succession by the scythe of the Destroyer. From the impious Nero in the first century of the Christian era to the tyrannic Bismarck in the nineteenth, nothing remains to posterity but their unhallowed memory—persecutors of their fellow-men, oppressors of civil and religious liberty!

The Church is again challenged into the field of conflict. The Holy Father, as Christ's representative, has at once accepted the gauntlet. In the Name of the Lord of Hosts he has taken up his pen, and as the Infallible Teacher of the nations he has sent forth his last magnificent encyclical, which, borne on the wings of the press to every quarter of the globe, is well calculated by its luminous reasoning, and by the calm majesty of its intrinsic power, to strike blind our modern Goliaths, and to drive their infatuated squadrons to downright desperation! 'Then why have the Gentiles raged, and the governments of the earth devised vain things?'

